

AETC News Clips



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4 Dec 01

MySanAntonio : Military

Military

JROTC expanding to meet growing demand

By Sharon K. Hughes
San Antonio Express-News

Web Posted : 12/04/2001 12:00 AM

When Nicole Soto joined the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps, she imagined herself executing drill team maneuvers, not leading her classmates through their paces as flight commander.

"I was really a shy, quiet person," said the 16-year-old cadet captain. "It's really a big experience. I never pictured myself as doing anything extroverted."

Students don't always see themselves as potential leaders, said Chief Master Sgt. Phillip Larson, but he does.

Larson brags freely about the 550-plus young leaders in Jay High School's JROTC program.

Jay has the largest of the 687 Air Force JROTC programs in the world. It beats out the second-largest program — West Jefferson High School in Harvey, La. — by about 150 cadets, said Michael Doyle, deputy director of the Air Force JROTC.

The Army and Navy have larger units — the largest is the Cleveland Junior Naval Academy, a public magnet school in Cleveland, which has 1,067 students.

Since the Sept. 11 attacks, everything associated with the military seems to be popular, but Doyle said schools and communities have always seen the value of JROTC.

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All the branches of the military students learn leadership are in the third year of a program expansion approved by Congress, he said. Some schools have been on a waiting list for a decade.

In San Antonio, Somerset High School was recently notified that it would get an Army JROTC unit in the next school year.

Currently, 2,949 schools have programs serving 462,000 teens, according to the Department of Defense. There are more than 600 schools on waiting lists and the four military branches are authorized to run 3,500 units total.

Congress is considering another expansion. The services provide uniforms, course materials and half the staff's pay. The school district pays the rest of the salaries.

Doyle said the program provides a lot of benefits to schools, including increased attendance, higher graduation rates, decreased gang activity and fewer discipline problems.

The annual national dropout rate is 6.7 percent, but for JROTC students it's 3.9 percent, he said.

"It gives a lot of kids a place they can go and gain an identity," he said. "Adolescence is kind of a crisis of identity."

Soto, the Jay student, talks like she found herself in JROTC.

"It helps open up your personality (and) build your self-esteem," she said. "All of a sudden you're just a whole other person."

At Jay, the corps, which has many of its own programs, is large enough to be almost a school within the school.

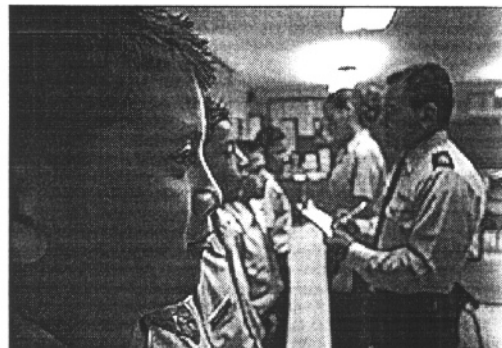
The corps has junior varsity and varsity drill teams, color guard, a saber squad and a drill team. Cadets have their own community service projects and help with other events in the school.

"Everybody thinks these kids are schooled to the point that they're finely tuned," Larson said. They're not, he said. They can adapt to different situations and still perform.

JROTC is not a recruiting tool, he said, but teaches students to be good citizens. Doyle said nationwide about 68 percent of cadets are involved with the military after high school, which includes college ROTC, military academies or joining the reserves. Only about 18 percent enlist right out of high school.

Larson said he counsels students to go to college. If they want to go in the military, they can go to one of the ROTC programs, then be a commissioned officer when they enter the service.

Both Soto and Cadet Maj. Anthony Anderson say they see the military in <http://news.mysanantonio.com/story.cfm?xla=saen&xlb=340&xlc=539692&xld=180>

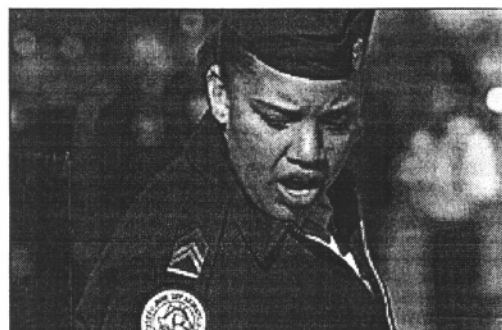


Wheatley Middle School sixth-grader Daniel Hernandez (foreground) stands at attention.

Photos by Robert McLeroy/Express-News



Jay High School has the largest of the 687 Air Force JROTC programs in the world, with more than 550 participants. Currently, 2,949 schools have JROTC programs serving 462,000 teens, according to the Department of Defense.



Flight Commander Denise Clark, 15, leads troops during marching exercises at Jay High School. Leaders say JROTC helps students gain an identity.

their futures. Soto aspires to be a medic; Anderson wants to work in information systems.

Anderson, Jay's mission support squadron commander, is a member of a group of student officers who make decisions that affect the entire corps.

He said the leadership role spills out into life beyond JROTC. Most of the time his friends are just his peers, but when they need someone to take on a leadership role, they're likely to look to him.

Everyone — teachers, administrators and other students — expects more from JROTC members, he said.

"Other people look toward you and expect you to do something above and beyond," Anderson said.

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12/04/2001

Military

'Miniature ROTC' helps middle-school students learn leadership

By Bridget Gutierrez
San Antonio Express-News

Web Posted : 12/04/2001 12:00 AM

Leaning forward on his tiptoes, 11-year-old Matthew Rico peeks over the clipboard of retired Army 1st Sgt. Jose Campos, then rolls back onto his heels and begins to sway side to side.

It's inspection time for the students in Wheatley Middle School's Leadership Corps, and Matthew is more than a little nervous.

"It makes me really scared," the sixth-grader confesses, "because sometimes I don't have the answers and sometimes my leg shakes."

Matthew is among 125 Wheatley students who are participating in the new leadership elective, which is modeled after the ROTC.

The pilot program, believed to be the first of its kind in San Antonio, exposes sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders to military rituals and lingo in an attempt to foster leadership skills and boost self-esteem.

Students wear Army uniforms one day a week and are able to earn medals and pins. The group also boasts a color guard, which has performed several times this year.

"It's like a miniature ROTC. It really is," Principal Linda Nance said.

When presented with the opportunity to run the program at her school — where the majority of students are poor, almost a third are in special education and low test scores have been the norm — Nance jumped at the chance.

"I think it helps them grow as individuals," she said. "I think it's a good stepping stone for them, a good building block."

In addition to the military instruction, students learn first aid, public speaking and teamwork.

"It's much more than just drilling," said retired Lt. Col. Tommie Malone, director of Army instructions for the San Antonio School District.

"Although that's the kind of technique we use ... we're not trying to make little soldiers out of them."

During class, Campos sometimes regales students with stories from his two decades in the military, always looking for moments to stress the importance of discipline and duty.

<http://news.mysanantonio.com/story.cfm?xla=saen&xlb=340&xlc=539693&xld=180>

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Recently, in the middle of a class review, Campos caught a student slumping in his seat.

"Sit up straight, Jesse," he said firmly. "You're hurting my back."

Then he launched into a lecture about why it's important to always pay attention to one's leader — a style that seems to resonate with these students.

Before she joined the Leadership Corps, eighth-grader Patricia Ortiz simply didn't like school.

"I was always in trouble," the 13-year-old confides.

Now, Patricia is "commander of all cadets," dreams of the day she'll fly Air Force jets and frequently garners praise for the change in her behavior. "I always knew I could do it," she said. "It's just that I never really tried."

It's exactly the success story for which Nance had hoped.

"This class has helped some of those kids find their niche," she said, "that they couldn't find before."

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FOCUS: MILITARY TRIBUNALS

Fighting for freedom

Last week, I watched "Crossfire" on CNN. Lawyer Alan Dershowitz said the main reason we should not have military tribunals is because they would be conducted by colonels and generals who would be looking for a promotion in making decisions about the innocence of people tried.

If I could use an expletive regarding what I think of Dershowitz, I would.

These colonels and generals are the people fighting the war against terrorists. They are dedicated Americans who have committed their lives to ensuring that America is kept free.

Professor Dershowitz should be deported as an un-American who has no respect for the military that has kept the country from subjugation for more than 200 years.

— Lt. Col. John F. Gardner, retired,
U.S. Air Force

Problem with secrecy

Sorry, George Will, you've got it wrong again. Your Nov. 26 column closed with, "America has a military problem — or a problem with a large military dimension. Military tribunals are a traditional, lawful part of the solution."

Americans have neither a military problem nor problem with a large military. Americans have — and always will have — a problem with government secrecy.

Three people — God only knows their qualifications or who is choosing them — speak for the American people and secretly apply rules to a case

that has impacted our entire nation.

Yet only a select few will ever know what "guidance" they were given by the folks who chose them.

Nope, there's only two American solutions to this matter — kill Osama bin Laden when he's found, or let the press cover the entire tribunal.

— Ted Coulter,
Helotes

Don't deserve rights

The Nov. 21 editorial "Secret military trials not American way" is way out of touch with reality.

The people who declared war on the United States, being non-citizens, deserve a quick and just trial by a military tribunal.

I think the objection is because the media would not be able to make it into a sensational event that sells papers and makes money. Greed under guise of the Constitution drives this.

Where does it say in the Constitution that opponents who are trying to kill Americans, and have done so, deserve the protection of our court system?

Let's allow current law, based on the previous use of tribunals, to rule in this case and not make a spectacle of punishing those we know are responsible.

— Del Pfranger,
Brackettville

Used against Americans

Re: the editorial "Secret military trials not American way."

Perhaps so, but they certainly are a component of America's legal history.

During World War II, Lt. Gen. J.L. DeWitt ordered civilians to appear before a "Board of (military) Officers" to determine if they should be prohibited "from being in, remaining in or entering" more than half of the United States.

The only "crime" of these U.S. citizens was their Italian ethnic origin. The orders stated that "material in the hands of the Board will not be made available for your inspection" and that their legal counsels — if any — "will not be heard by the Board nor be permitted to examine witnesses."

These civilians were not notified of the charges against them. Two weeks after the Board's inquisition, it issued orders excluding them from 29 states and the District of Columbia.

It also ordered them to report to a military officer and provide photographs, fingerprints and specimen signatures before their immediate departure. At their ultimate destination, they were required to report to the nearest office of the FBI.

The editorial deplores the application of such legal tactics against non-citizens as an "assault on American values." But these military trials were held in secret, in the United States, and the subjects, including my father, were American citizens.

I suggest that before we wax eloquent over the rights of foreigners who have terrorized our nation, we consider how we have applied secret military trials to our own innocent citizens.

— Angelo de Guttadauro

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Firefighters go underground

Bunker is temporary fire station

Lynda Stringer
Times Record News

Sheppard Air Force Base firefighters are living down under while a new hanger to house their crash truck is rising from its foundation.

Four firefighters in two-man crews take turns manning 24-hour shifts in a newly renovated underground alert bunker that was deserted after a Strategic Air Command detachment left the base in 1976. The facility — Fire Station No. 3 — positions the crew closer to the end of the runway and dramatically improves response times to aircraft crashes or emergencies on the flight line.

About 30 yards away a 25-man crew from the elite 819th RED HORSE Squadron — a rapid deployable combat engineering unit — is erecting a parking bay for the crew's crash truck. The crew started work on the structure Oct. 28. The target date for completion of the project is before Christmas. Last-minute details would be completed after the Christmas break by a smaller 12-man crew.

The 819th RED HORSE — Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron, Engineer — is based at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana and is famous for its work during the Vietnam War. The unit was brought back in 1997 after being inactivated seven years earlier.

There are only three other RED HORSE squadrons.

While the Sheppard project is not a wartime deployment, it provides the squadron members with valuable training they'll need when deployed on a combat mission.

"We build bunkers, runways, buildings using expedient methods and we're deployable around the world in 72 hours," said Red Horse Squadron project engineer 1st. Lt. Ryan Novotny.

Compared to building entire bases and deploying with construction equipment and materials as well as weapons, vehicles, food service, supplies and medical equipment, the Sheppard crash truck bay is small scale.

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Sheppard AFB, Wichita Falls, Texas
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"But it provides training for us and the impact to the mission here is great," Novotny said. "It fixes a problem CES — civil engineering squadron — has and it helps provide safety for the pilots and the firefighters."

The new Station No. 8 crew, which specializes in aircraft fire/rescue has been calling the underground station home for about three months. Led by firefighter Richard Mackin, assistant chief of training, twenty of the department's 78 members, of which 62 are civilians, pitched in to completely gut the interior of the 1,100-square-foot building and put up new walls and a new kitchen, living area and bunk room. It took them two months to do the work.

The construction project was done through Sheppard's Self-Help Program, which provides the materials to base personnel, who do much of the work themselves. The firefighters left the electrical and alarm systems to the experts.

Mackin said, while he and other members don't have a formal background in construction, he called himself a handyman. "We all have our own specialties, firemen always do stuff on the side," he said.

Being closer to the end of the runway will improve the crew's crash response time to under the required 3 minutes. The firefighters have in the past had to man a small

remote structure in 2-hour shifts near the center of the airfield while training flights were in the air. The crash truck was not protected from the elements.

"The fire folks had to be on line stand-by," said Master Sgt. Rodney Ryalls, deputy fire chief. "This improves the quality of life for these guys and they're still able to cover the airfield."

The new 44-foot-by-58-foot crash truck bay, designed to park two trucks, is a pre-engineered building, equipped with power door and louvers, interior mechanical rooms for storage, a fire response alert system and an emergency eye wash station. The new facilities will enable the crash crews to respond anywhere on the flight line and parking aprons within 2 minutes and 42 seconds.

The department, which in its 60-year history has had several fire stations, now has three. The main fire station is manned by aircraft crash crews and structure fire crews, the new station houses aircraft fire crews only and there is a remote station manned by aircraft crash crews just outside of Frederick, Okla. to cover the area where student pilots train.

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Altus AFB OK Newsclips

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Altus carries flags on mission

ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE — An Altus AFB KC-135 recently carried 164 American flags during an Operation Noble Eagle refueling mission.

The flags are now veterans of today's war on terrorism and will hold that honor forever.

Altus businesses display flags throughout the year. The flags also are used for ceremonies at Altus AFB.

Jeff Greenlee, Kiwanis Club flag committee chairman, said, "It was like a blessing for the flags. I know that one of the greatest honors in the military is to have the opportunity to serve. It was a great gesture to have the flags in a similar admirable position."

Staff Sgt. Leslie Yarbough configured the aircraft for loading the flags the day before the mission. He built a holding container so they would

stay supported during the flight. He said, "I thought it was great support for the U.S. of A., and it's good to know that the people of Altus are beside us."

Later that evening, the flags were loaded into the tanker by Technical Sgt. Dicky Hunt, Staff Sgt. Kevin Mathews, Technical Sgt. Timothy King and Staff Sgt. John Lavin; with the assistance of Lt. Col. Richard Baldwin.

Capt. Keith Pechin, Capt. Derek Levine and Technical Sgt. Joseph Barry flew the Noble Eagle mission, to support the Homeland Defense mission.

Sgt. Yarbough, Staff Sgt. Raul D. Padilla and Staff Sgt. Neal Husong unloaded the flags after the mission and returned them to the Kiwanis Club in time to be displayed on Veterans Day.

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Altus Imagination Station to be reality

BY CASSIE FORTIN

STAFF WRITER

CFORTIN@LAWTON-CONSTITUTION.COM

ALTUS — It's beginning to look a lot like a new 14,000-square-foot Imagination Station playground is making its way to Altus.

The idea originated with a mother from Altus Air Force base who took her children to Lawton's playground.

"She brought the idea to the city council where I am a member and asked that we consider building one here," said Danny McCuiston, one of the playground coordinators.

"The city decided unanimously to build the park and I agreed to be one of the two coordinators right away. The other coordinator is Scot Simco, the president of the Rotary Club."

The park will include bathroom facilities, a safe zone with one exit and one entrance, picnic areas and benches.

The playground area will include an area for children ages 2 to 5 and an area for older children. Highlights of the playground will be a castle, slides,

a balance beam on chains, a truck, a tractor, a spaceship and a maze.

"We will also have wheelchair accessibility," McCuiston said. "When we went to the schools the first person I saw was a girl in a wheelchair and I asked her what she wanted in the park. She said she wanted to be able to play in the park. That was pretty moving. I want to make sure that she can."

Dennis Wills, the architect, devised his plans from a collaboration of his own design experience and the desires of the children of Altus. The children not only helped design the playground, but have ownership in it as well.

Children drew their visions

All the children drew their vision for the Imagination Station. Then, Wills visited some of the ele-

mentary schools and talked to the children about what they wanted on the playground.

He gathered their drawings and took ideas from them to create the actual plans. Then at a public meeting, Altus residents gathered to hear the ideas.

Also, the playground is slated to cost \$150,000,

funded by donations from the public. The children of Altus have become involved with this as well.

Valerie Roberts, the director of public relations for Altus Public Schools, said the children have been involved from the start.

"They made their drawings and some students even talked to the architect. Then they wanted to contribute money to the project, so we did a Pennies for the Park coin collection contest," Roberts said. "They put a big water jug at each school. Students at Sunset Elementary collected \$905.72. Kids from several area schools collected almost \$3,000. All participating schools will have their names placed on the pickets around the park for their efforts."

The Kiwanis Club was the first to donate funds with a \$4,000 contribution. The Rotary Club is doing a Secret Calls for Santa fund-raiser, charging \$10 per call. They hope to raise \$5,000 from this project and get it matched by the district Rotary Club.

Another program under way is the picket fund-raiser.

"People throughout the town can purchase a

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Altus AFB OK Newsclips

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picket for the fence and get their name on it for \$25. We think this will make a great gift," Simco said. "Forms are being distributed throughout the schools next week."

Engraved bricks also are being sold. Order forms can be picked up from the Frederick Chamber of Commerce, Carnegie Library or any Friends of the Park member. Bricks cost \$50 for a 4-by-8 inch brick, \$200 for an 8-by-8 brick, and \$1,000 for a special 8-by-8 brick with a custom logo.

The city of Frederick has promised matching funds up to \$2,500, and former resident M.G. Tomlison has promised matching funds of up to \$25,000.

To date, more than \$25,000 has been raised for the park.

The location for the park is on the agenda for next week's council meeting. The projected site is Falcon Road by the museum and Safety Town.

The date of construction of the park is Sept. 25-29, 2002.

More than 300 volunteers will set up the equipment.

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